

**QST ENVIRONMENTAL INC.
MEMORANDUM
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

TO: 539-6074-1500 File

FROM: Lois DuMey

DATE: November 27, 2001

SUBJECT: Agricultural Coordination,
October 26, 1998, U.S. Route 34

ATTENDANCE:

Paula Green	IDOT	(309) 671-3478
Ken Park	IDOT	(309) 671-3466
Tom Lacy	IDOT	(309) 671-3453
Jackie Schertz	IDOT	(309) 671-3479
Dave Clark	IDOT	(309) 671-3493
John Rowley	IDOT-B.D. & E.	(217) 785-2834
Michael Bruns	IDOT-B.D. & E.	(217) 782-7077
Jim Hartwig	IDOA	(217) 782-6297
Kevin Rund	IL Farm Bureau	(309) 671-3493
Kris Erickson	QST	(314) 567-4600
Lee Austin	QST	(309) 693-5570
Lois DuMey	QST	(314) 567-4600
Linda Huff	Huff and Huff	(708) 579-5976
Amy Moon	Huff and Huff	(708) 579-5950

An agricultural coordination meeting was held on October 26, 1998 at the IDOT District 4 office in Peoria, Illinois to discuss project progress, the alternate evaluation process, and issues of concern related to the U.S. Route 34 project. More specifically, the meeting addressed agricultural criteria used in the alternate evaluation process and the potential effects to agricultural resources in the project study area. The meeting focused on the section of U.S. Route 34 between the intersection of Carman Road and U.S. Route 34 and U.S. Route 67. Discussion follows:

Project History

Following introductions, Kris Erickson provided a brief history of the U.S. Route 34 project. The roadway from Carman Road to U.S. Route 67 is proposed to be a four-lane expressway. Potential impacts are to be documented as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The right of way is 265 feet except in areas of steep grades and stream crossings where the width will be enlarged depending on slope conditions. Since the last agricultural meeting, the number of sections has been reduced from five to three since the number of study alternates has decreased. The Monmouth area constitutes Section IV. In addition, the labeling of the study alternates has been similarly combined (see Agricultural Coordination Meeting Packet).

Alternate Analysis

A primary element of this phase of the study alternate evaluation process was to include a number of agricultural considerations in addition to potential traffic, socioeconomic, land use, and natural resource impacts. As a result of this process, 1M2B (yellow in Section I), 3E4B (purple), 3G4B (yellow in

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Section II), 5B (purple), and 5E (yellow in Section III) have been recommended to be carried forward to the public as these alternates best meet the transportation objectives of the project by reducing environmental impacts relative to other alternates.

Section I

- Kevin Rund requested clarification on the location of floodplains in the study area. All proposed alternates in Sections I and II potentially involve 100-year floodplains. Tom Lacy stated that all roadways located in the floodplains will be constructed 3 feet above a 50-year event per prior agreement with the Corps of Engineers. The effects to floodplain storage will be evaluated in the selection of a preferred alternate.
- Kevin Rund requested information on man-made drainage ditches in the study area. Between U.S. Route 34 and the railroad tracks, the study area contains man-made drainage ditches that cross U.S. Route 34 west of Carmen Road to Crystal Lake. Stormwater is then pumped to the river. The alignment has been adjusted to minimize impacts to drainage channels, and the adjustments to the alignment will be explained in the environmental document.
- A small part of a sand hill prairie will be potentially affected by 1M2B (yellow).
- Below the bluff, the existing U.S. Route 34 will remain open as an access road to existing homes, businesses, and farms.
- John Rowley noted that the tables in the packet list the number of road closures but the map does not indicate these locations. Currently, proposed road closures will be presented at the public meeting.

Section II

- With the purple alignment (3E4B), direct access to U.S. Route 34 from the high school would be eliminated and all school traffic would be redirected to Route 94. The yellow alignment (3G4B) would provide the possibility for a future interchange south of the school if traffic warranted. Acreage for upgrading of TR 150 in the Biggsville area is taken into consideration in the environmental evaluation.

Section III

- Shauman farm is located along existing Route 34 just east of Kirkwood and will not be considered an agricultural business.

General

- Interchange areas were not included in the calculations of the "Summary of Potential Impacts" tables (Agricultural Coordination Meeting Packet).
- There could be some minor alignment orientation and geometric changes in the alternates as they become more refined.
- For the purpose of this study, an office in a home that is devoted to farm records will not be classified as an agricultural business. An agricultural business is defined as being a business operation with no secondary use, therefore not an "in-home" business.
- Currently, mitigation measures for wetlands, floodplains, and historic sites have not been identified.
- Mitigation measures will be discussed in the EIS.
- 11th Avenue at Monmouth will not be closed.

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Agency Comments

1. Jim Hartwig requested that all supporting information for alternate placement and the resulting agricultural impacts, as well as all environmental impacts, be discussed in detail in the EIS.
2. Jim Hartwig requested that, from the onset, IDOA be involved in the mitigation process to minimize agricultural impacts. Agricultural impacts need to include potential borrow areas. Paula Green explained that the amount of borrow required for construction would be calculated but, the location of borrow areas would not be identified.
3. Kevin Rund requested severances per parcel be considered as an additional agricultural criterion since this information would be more functional to the Illinois Farm Bureau when analyzing agricultural impacts (as opposed to impacts per tract). Severances per tract were initially used since U.S. Department of Agricultural (USDA) information is more current than plat books and operators and owners are easily identified. Paula Green and John Rowley agreed that for the final alternate evaluation, both severances by tract and parcel will be determined.
4. Since the standard width for field access is 20 feet, Kevin Rund suggested a wider access due to the large width of modern combines. In addition, semi-trucks are required to enter and exit fields to transport grain. Paula Green stated the width of field access is determined by IDOT policy and suggested that administrators between agricultural agencies and IDOT review the issue of field access width.
5. The location of frontage roads, crossovers, and field access have not been determined. Crossovers will be constructed based on policy and additional analysis. Jim Hartwig expressed concerns with regards to the safety of the farmer and the number of crossovers. Dave Clark explained that every access point increases the potential for accidents and each crossover must be analyzed for appropriateness, suitability, and safety issues. This issue should also be discussed at the IDOT and IDOA central offices.

Summary

1M2B (yellow in Section I), 3E4B (purple), 3G4B (yellow in Section II), 5B (purple), and 5E (yellow in Section III) are the alignments to be carried forward for further study and shown to the public meeting on November 10, 1998. Displays to be shown to the public will include:

- a typical cross section for a rural expressway;
- an illustration of a typical rural expressway;
- aerials with alignments; and
- an upgrade expressway in Monmouth.

There may be some minor adjustments to alternates based on public comments following the November 10 meeting. Another round of evaluations will be utilized to select a preferred alternate from these final alternates.

U.S. Route 34
Carman Road to Monmouth
Agricultural Coordination Meeting
April 16, 1999

At the last Agricultural Coordination Meeting held in October 1998, two areas of the study still had two possible alternatives. These were:

- the Biggsville bypass area (east of TR 111/Bogus Hollow Rd. to west of TR 190), and
- the portion starting south of Kirkwood and extending east to US 67 (TR 26 to US 67).

This meeting was held to discuss IDOT's recommendations for the final alignment of the U.S. Route 34 project. The recommended final alignments will be presented to the public at an informational meeting to be held on May 6, 1999 at Union High School.

In attendance at the meeting were the following:

Jim Hartwig	Illinois Department of Agricultural
Kevin Rund	Illinois Farm Bureau
John Rowley	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
	Bureau of Design & Environment
Paula Green	IDOT District 4
Jackie Schertz	IDOT District 4
Tom Lacy	IDOT District 4
Ken Park	IDOT District 4

Biggsville Area

- Alternate 3E is the northern alternate which mainly follows existing U.S. Route 34 from TR 111/Bogus Hollow Road to just east of Union High School, then dips to the south of Biggsville, rejoining the existing U.S. Route 34 alignment to the east of Biggsville in the vicinity of TR 190.
- Alternate 3G is the more southerly alternate which leaves the existing U.S. Route 34 alignment in the area of TR 111/Bogus Hollow Road, extends south of Union High School, and rejoins the existing U.S. Route 34 alignment to the east of Biggsville in the vicinity of TR 190.

⇒ Alternate 3G was recommended for the final alignment. This recommendation was based mainly on the following four points:

1. No displacements with 3G vs. 7 displacements on 3E.
2. No major utility relocations on 3G vs. relocation of a cellular phone tower, a GTE telephone switching station, and 600 meters of optic cable with 3E.
3. 3G offers a better and safer access to Union High School.
4. The southern alignment would be compatible with an interchange at IL 94/IL 116.

John Hartwig asked if property owners expressed support or opposition to either alternative at the last public meeting. Tom Lacy replied that neither alternative was either strongly opposed by the public or the Village of Biggsville. Several individuals did, however, express concern about safety issues with the northern alignment which goes on the northern boundary of the school.

Kevin Rund questioned road closures at TR 122 and TR 138, both located between IL 94 and Biggsville. Tom Lacy explained that TR 122 is 1/2 mile east of IL 94 and TR 138 is within 1/2 mile of the next median opening to the east (TR 150). Policy states that on new alignment median openings should be spaced 1 mile apart. This portion of the project is on new alignment; therefore, median openings at 1/2 mile intervals do not meet policy. In addition, with the proposed interchange at IL 94/IL 116, TR 122 would be located too close to the entrance ramp to be safely left open. Kevin Rund still expressed concern over the 2+ miles of adverse travel resulting from closure of TR 138. Tom Lacy said IDOT would re-evaluate the closure. *(Subsequent evaluation of the TR 138 closure has been completed and the District Office has decided to leave TR 138 open if approval of a waiver to policy can be obtained from the Central Office and the FHWA.)*

Kirkwood to U.S. Route 67

- Alternate 5B generally follows the existing U.S. 34 alignment along its east/west portion and ties into the existing U.S. 34/U.S. 67 interchange.
- Alternate 5E is located 1/2 mile south of the existing U.S. 34 alignment along its east/west portion and ties into U.S. 67 approximately 1 mile south of the existing U.S. 34/U.S. 67 interchange.

⇒ Alternate 5B was recommended for the final alignment. This recommendation was based mainly because 5B:

1. Impacts less farm land.
2. Requires less borrow.
3. Has less total length of access roads.

Jim Hartwig asked if the abandoned U.S. 34 pavement between the curves east of Kirkwood would be removed. Tom Lacy explained that although the exhibit did not show the northern portion removed, it looked apparent there was no need to retain the existing pavement. Mr. Lacy said he would contact the consultant to be certain. *(Subsequent communication with the consultant confirmed that the majority of abandoned pavement in this area was to be removed.)*

Mr. Hartwig wanted to know if removal of the pavement included returning the area to tillable conditions. Normal procedures require removal of the roadway bed and replacement with topsoil.

Mr. Hartwig also wanted to know if the excess right of way, resulting from removal of the existing pavement, could be given to the adjacent property owner. Paula Green stated that land owned by the State could not be given to private individuals. There are ways for people to purchase excess right of way, but it is often a lengthy process.

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At the last Agricultural Coordination meeting for this project, Mr. Hartwig and Mr. Rund had expressed concern about the width of field entrances. They felt the normal width of twenty feet did not take into account that modern practices often require that semi trucks have access to the fields. Since that last meeting this issue was discussed at length in the District. The Geometrics Engineer was consulted and has recommended a 30 foot wide entrance to accommodate field access for semi trucks. The 30 foot wide field entrance will be recommended in the Phase I design report.